

DISCIPLINE USING EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

Working successfully with Volunteers of any kind, requires an understanding of needs of the volunteers along with a special type of patience and tolerance. Everyone involved in Emergency communications is in a leadership role in some form.

A leader should manage the group activities, in a way that will best meet the purposes of the group. Therefore, it is necessary to establish and maintain a level of and discipline that is effective discipline. I define effective discipline, as discipline which brings about the desired result.

Each volunteer exhibits different personalities. Each leader also has a different personality. It takes time and experience for each person to discover the style of leadership that best fits his or her personality. We don't all have to lead the same to be effective leaders.

As leaders, sometimes it is easier to respond to problems from reflex rather than from understanding. Sometimes our responses are in defense of our own feelings, or from misunderstanding the feelings or intentions of others. Many actions of persons that are labeled or perceived as misconduct are basically inappropriate attempts to be helpful. Always assume the best, if someone says something that might offend you if you take it the wrong way, Don't. It's that simple; take it the best way it can be taken.

I want to reel quick cover a Five-Step Approach to effective discipline.

Keeping in mind the needs of your volunteer group, think of their behaviors or situations that are or have been problems for you. Practice this five-step method in analyzing the problem situations. A good way to practice is to write responses to the five steps:

- 1. Describe the Situation.** Objectively summarize the circumstances and behaviors. Try not to make judgments at this point. Merely outline the obvious facts of the situation.
- 2. What Is the Problem?** Describe and label the actions or behaviors that you see as problems. Who is involved? What are they doing exactly that causes a problem?
- 3. Whose Problem Is It?** Look at the behavior. Determine for whom it is a problem for, and why. Is it a problem for the volunteer themselves? Like could what they are doing be dangerous to themselves, or is it a problem for other volunteers, the reputation of the group, the reputation of our leaders? Or is it just a problem for you.
- 4. How serious is it?** Try to determine if the problem is actually serious enough that it needs to be addressed at all. Will the disciplinary route do more harm than good for the group as a whole? Can it be addressed in general training later so that others in the group who may have the same problem benefit from it? Correctly identifying and answering the first four questions will help tremendously in answering number five which is the key to this whole exercise of our time tonight.
- 5. Possible Solutions.** Consider several possible solutions that might remedy the problem. Will this solution in some way account for meeting the real needs and goals of the group? If you can't answer this with a yes, you haven't researched the solution for long enough. Remember it is much easier to react to a problem than it is to come up with real solutions to actually fix a problem. Fixing the problem means taking the time to find a method of discipline that will solve the problem and meet the goals of the group.

Guidelines for solutions

- Accept each volunteer at his/her present level of development. Everybody was new at one time. Try to establish a friendly relationship with your net participants. This will go a long way toward nurturing further development and good relationships.
- Establish an atmosphere of mutual trust, friendship and respect. Whenever possible make your comments and behavior positive and encouraging.
- Recognize the difference between what you do to get through a situation and what you can do to resolve it. And realize which method is most appropriate at the time the situation arises.
- Consider that changing your approach to an individual, may be the most effective way to arrive at the best solution to a problem.
- Set rules and guidelines that are necessary for proper training and in line with the goals and mission of the group. Try to ensure that everyone clearly understands them and their purposes. Enforce them calmly, firmly and impartially. Most people understand and appreciate the need for rules. A group with no rules is the best defined as total chaos. You can't let some people disregard the rules and expect others to follow them.
- Do not argue with group members, state your position and have the history, that says I am not going to argue about it. Do take time to carefully explain group objectives and how they can help with a focus on what they can do to help.
- Never speak disrespectfully to anyone. That is a quickest way to lose the respect of the rest of your group.
- Realize that you are human. Be willing to acknowledge your mistakes and learn from them. It makes it easier on those that follow your leadership to acknowledge their mistakes